



SCHOOL BUS, INC.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "POINT OF CONTACT" **MAY 2008 NEWSLETTER**

2008 ANNUAL SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING and TRAIN the TRAINER SESSIONS ARE SET

This year we will be offering the required annual School Bus Driver Training (4 hours) and the "Train the Trainer" (TTT) (6 hours) sessions across the State. The following rules indicate who a bus driver is and who is required to attend this annual training. Training will be offered across the state, the same as last year. If you wish to have school bus driver training in your area please contact Harlow's Bus Sales in Webster, SD at 1-888-419-4023. The training sites will be posted on the State's web site and will be included in later newsletters. The deadline for having training scheduled in your area will be July 3, 2008. Be sure to read all this information.

STANDARDS FOR STATE REQUIRED SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING

In the effort to meet the standards of ARSD 24:06:08:01, the Department of Education has contracted with School Bus, Inc. to provide access for bus driver training across the state. The requirement has been in place in South Dakota for the past several years. School administrators have been verifying their compliance by signing off on the assurance statement that validates yearly accreditation. Starting with the 2004/2005 school year, the Department of Education has required proof of bus driver training and in doing so, have found that many drivers have not been meeting this expectation due to either lack of time or availability.

24:06:08:01. Training of school bus drivers and bus attendants. School bus operators must provide annual training for school bus drivers in accordance with the section entitled "Driver" pages 79 to 82 and the section entitled "bus attendant" pages 82 and 83 in the National School Transportation Specifications & Procedures, 2000 Revised Edition. In addition, the following provisions apply:

- (1) The State approved pre-service training program shall include a minimum of two hours of classroom training, which will include knowledge of basic first aid procedures, and two hours of behind-the-wheel training to enable safe and efficient vehicle operation.**
- (2) The Annual State approved in-service program shall include a minimum of four hours of classroom and/or behind-the-wheel training.**

For the purpose of who needs training the following definition will apply to all schools and contractors for their School Bus Drivers and School Transportation Specialists:

A person who holds a valid driver's license, and who is employed or volunteers to drive any type of passenger vehicle that is leased, owned by a school or a school bus contractor that transports students to and from school, school activities or any other school related event in a vehicle of 10 passengers or more. This person must have within the last 12 months, completed a state approved four-hour in-service training that is designed to meet standards of ARSD 24:06:08:01.

The Department of Education and School Bus, Inc. will have school bus driver training videotapes and other materials available that allow districts to complete the training. It is, however, required that the training be facilitated by an individual that has previously been trained in a "train the trainer" session during the summer of 2006 for the following school year.

Pre-service training may be performed by a school district or contractor employee who has the working knowledge of the school bus and its special equipment. This training needs to be documented and placed in the employee's file to certify they have met the State's minimum pre-service training requirement. All new employees hired during the school year will be required to attend the annual training each year.

Annual training offered between June 1 to May 31 of the next year will be applied to the current school fiscal year (Sept. to May).

“Train the Trainer” sessions will be held during the summer of each year for those who wish to train their own school bus drivers. Training sites across the state will be offered in July, August and September for those districts who wish to send their drivers to training sessions.

A minimum of ninety percent of each school districts bus drivers must receive the required annual training each school fiscal year. In emergency cases the Department of Education can overwrite the bus driver requirements in the personnel record form (PRF) system with the firm understanding that this training would be completed as soon as possible.

Districts need to plan to have all their drivers trained each school year to avoid a possible suspension of accreditation. Once your drivers have completed the required four hour in-service training, the Train the Trainer will forward the drivers names to School Bus, Inc. and they will compile a formatted list to be sent to DOE. The DOE will send out “Certificates of Completion” once the names have been turned in to them. Once the district has received the certificate of completion for its drivers, it is the responsibility of the district to up-date those (PRF) records to indicate the bus drivers have completed the training. All annual training will be done in a time frame to allow schools to certify that all drivers have been trained on their PRF. All required training is to be completed by October 15 of each school year.

TO: All Interested “Train the Trainers”

If you are interested in training your own school bus driver staff you must attend one of the following Train the Trainer (TTT) classes to become certified to train. Each session will be six hours in length. Each attendee will be able to use four hours of the class that fits their transportation needs the best. The State will only accept training lists turned in by one of the certified TTT. There will be three TTT sessions across the state again this year.

Each session will be from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. There will be a lunch break from 12:00 to 1:00. Attendees will be responsible for their own meals and room if they wish to stay overnight.

The first TTT session will be in Sioux Falls, SD on Monday, July 21, 2008 at School Bus, Inc., 5100 W 8th St. (from the intersection of 8th St & Marion Rd, go 1 block east on 8th St).

The second TTT session will be in Pierre, SD on Tuesday, July 22, 2008 at the Cultural Heritage Center Building. The address is 900 Governors Dr. – it is the next building located NE of the state Library. Take the street (E Broadway St) on the North side of the State Capitol and go East to Governors Drive. Turn north and go to the address above.

The third TTT session will be in Rapid City, SD on Thursday, July 24, 2008 at the Rapid City School District Transportation Facility, 3775 S Hwy #79 (Cambell St). It is located about 2 blocks south of the intersection of Cambell and Fairmont, take the service road to the school complex and then to building “D”.

Concerns have been expressed to the State concerning the quality of training by some TTT’s. This year each TTT will be required to give out evaluation forms for each class given. Classes may be limited to the capacity of the room. Please register early. These will be the only three TTT classes held this year. Cost for each attendee will be \$75.00 per person. You may bring a check made payable to School Bus, Inc. the day of the training, pre-pay by sending us a check in the mail or we will bill the company (cost for non-tax exempt companies attending in the following cities will be: Sioux Falls \$79.44 w/tax, Pierre & Douglas \$79.50 w/tax) or school district after the training is completed. School Bus, Inc. will purchase three sets of training CD’s for the TTT to use for their training. All attendees should bring a notebook, pen and pencil for the classes. The deadline for TTT registration will be Friday, July 3, 2008 for all three classes. You may register for any class by calling Jim Shafer (605-334-6644), sending a fax (605-334-4245) or an email to: jimschoolbusinc.sfsd@k12.sd.us Please reference “TTT, date and location you wish to attend”.

EPA Makes Grants More Attractive in 2008

The various regions of the Environmental Protection Agency have announced their 2008 Requests for Proposals for projects to reduce diesel emissions, including emissions from school buses. This year’s grant program is more attractive than the previous Clean School Bus USA grant program, so even if you have not applied for funds in the past, you may want to do so now. EPA has dropped the requirement for a matching contribution this year, so there is no obligation for a grantee to provide additional funds or in-kind services as there was with previous grants. In addition, the grants will fund a much larger portion of new bus purchases than in the past: EPA will pay 25% of the cost of a replacement school bus that meets 2007 emission standards, and 50% of the cost of a replacement bus that meets 2010 standards. As in previous years, contractors cannot apply directly for a grant; you must work through your school district to access the funds. To see the RFP for your region, go to

<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/diesel/grantfund.htm#cur-opportunity> and click on the appropriate regional link. Applications are due in mid-June.

Availability of Clean Diesel Grants

EPA is currently soliciting applications for clean diesel projects to reduce emissions from the nation's 11 million diesel vehicles. These projects can include adding after-treatment technology to reduce diesel emissions, vehicle re-powering projects, the use of anti-idling equipment or even the purchase of new buses meeting 2007 or later emissions standards. While school buses received the lion's share of clean diesel projects in the past, the program has been expanded to cover virtually all diesel vehicles and stationary equipment. However, school buses will remain a priority. While contractors will certainly want to work with their local school districts, they can also submit applications jointly with other governmental entities such as state transportation departments, clean air agencies and local planning organizations or through nonprofit entities that provide air quality or transportation services, like national or state school transportation associations or even national or local environmental organizations. Below is a summary of the some basic information concerning the pending grant opportunities indicating what areas are covered, the amount of funding available and when proposals must be submitted.

Midwest States Region is: IA, NE, KS, MO, NM, TX, OK, AR, and LA. Amount of grant money available is five million. Project size is \$250,000.00 to \$2 million. Due date is 5/30/08.

FMCSA Issues New NPRM on CDL Licensing

FMCSA has come out with a new NPRM making changes to the CDL testing standards and setting new standards for the CLP (Commercial Learner's Permit). This one won't have the impact of the training requirement, as its greatest burden will be on the states; but it will likely affect operations to varying degrees, particularly in those states where significant changes will occur as a result of the NPRM. Highlights of the proposal are:

Applicants will have to complete the knowledge test before receiving a CLP.

Apparently, there are still states that issue a CLP before the applicant has passed the written tests; that would no longer be allowed.

The use of foreign language interpreters will be prohibited in the knowledge and skills tests.

This was identified as a source of potential fraud by the Inspector General's office, so will be disallowed. Applicants will be able to take knowledge tests that are written or recorded in a foreign language, but the skills tests will be conducted only in English.

Applicants will have to wait at least 30 days after receiving a CLP before applying for a CDL.

This measure is intended to prevent drivers from going to "CDL mills" and getting their licenses in less than two weeks. FMCSA believes it takes at least 30 days of training and practice to learn the necessary skills to operate a CMV safely.

No one under 18 can receive a CLP.

Even though applicants can't get a CDL until they are at least 18, some states currently allow them to apply for and receive a permit before they turn 18; that would end under the NPRM.

The only endorsement allowed on the CLP will be a restricted P endorsement.

States will not be allowed to put an S endorsement on a CLP, because the S endorsement is only needed when the driver is actually transporting students. Thus, there is no need to have the S endorsement on the CLP when training for the CDL because it would not be a safe practice to allow driver trainees to transport students. In order for the applicant to train on a school bus, the S endorsement knowledge test must be passed and noted on the driver's record. FMCSA also proposes that the P endorsement on the CLP be class specific. The driver can only undergo skills testing in a class of passenger vehicles or school bus for which he or she has passed knowledge training. This requirement is similar to what is required for P or S endorsements as CDL upgrades. The CLP holder must also be accompanied and directly supervised by a driver qualified for such a vehicle type.

States will have to conduct record checks and confirm legal presence status prior to issuing a CLP.

There is currently no requirement that a state check the CDLIS or other driving records before issuing a permit; that would change under the NPRM. Applicants for a CLP would have to meet the same qualification standards as CDL drivers. Also, in keeping with security standards, states will have to verify applicants' social security numbers and/or take other measures to ensure the legal residency of applicants.

States will have to recognize CLPs issued by other states for training purposes.

Currently, some states require that a driver can train in their state only if he holds a permit from that state, which makes it difficult for drivers to be in training programs outside their states of residence. In order to maintain the "one driver, one license, one driving record concept" of the CDL program and to establish uniformity in the issuance of CLPs, the CLPs would only be issued by the State of domicile; but the CLP must be recognized for training purposes by all other States in the same manner as CDLs are recognized.

CLPs will be limited to 6 months, with one renewal of 90 days allowed.

FMCSA intends to limit the length of time that a driver who is not skilled enough to pass the test is able to continue to drive on public highways.

CDLs will have to be renewed every 8 years or less.

States continue to lengthen the period between renewals of licenses, to the point that two states now have lifetime CDLs—or have no renewal until age 65. This is intended to ensure that driver records get updated periodically.

All states will have to use standardized restriction and endorsement codes.

This is intended to reduce inconsistency and make it easier for enforcement officers to understand out of state licenses. Currently a K restriction, for example, means several different things, depending on the state. In addition, there would be three new federal restrictions for applicants who take their skills tests in vehicles with (1) an automatic transmission; (2) air over hydraulic brakes; or (3) a non-fifth wheel (pintle hook). All three restrictions would be assigned standardized restriction codes, along with a standardized code for the current air brake restriction.

All driving examiners will have to have formal training and background checks.

This section applies to all examiners, both those employed by the State and those employed by third party testers. The State will be required to establish initial and refresher training that meets or exceeds the requirements established by AAMVA. All examiners will have to successfully complete the CDL test examiner training course and pass an examination before the State may certify them to administer CDL tests. The State will also have to conduct initial and annual criminal background checks of all test examiners, and rescind the examiner's certification if he/she does not successfully complete the refresher training or fails the annual criminal background check. Also, the third party tester would have to conduct at least 50 skill tests annually and each individual examiner employed by the tester would have to conduct at least 10 skills test annually. These minimums would ensure that the costs of oversight do not exceed the benefits to the State that accrue from having the third party tester. In addition, the minimums would ensure that each tester and examiner is conducting enough tests to maintain his/her expertise. However, FMCSA is aware that some States have approved motor carriers as third party testers to conduct tests for their own employees. FMCSA specifically requests comments on whether the requirements for minimum numbers of tests per year would adversely affect such motor carriers.

States will have to establish oversight systems for all examiners and testers.

States would be required to conduct unannounced annual on-site inspections of third party tester and examiner records to compare the results of the tests of applicants who receive CDLs with the scoring sheets for the tests. States would also be required to conduct both covert and overt monitoring of both State and third party skills test examiners. The State would have to establish and maintain databases that contain information on each examiner, information on the tests administered by each examiner, and the results of audits and monitoring, including the pass/fail rates of individual examiners. This would enable the State to identify examiners who have unusually high pass or failure rates. The third party tester would have to submit a weekly schedule of skills test appointments for the following week so that inspectors could visit when testing is occurring, and companies would have to keep records of all tests. The entire NPRM can be found at www.regulations.gov.

FMCSA Extends Comment Deadline

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has extended the deadline for comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on training for CDL applicants until May 24. If you have not yet submitted your thoughts on this proposal, you still have time to do so. The proposal requires that all applicants for a CDL who expect to drive out of state must submit a certificate of training in order to be licensed. The certificate must be issued by an accredited training facility and show that the applicant for a class B CDL has successfully completed 90 hours of training. This training would be in addition to the school bus driver training required by the state. FMCSA has been questioned on the assumptions that FMCSA made concerning school bus operations and recommend an exemption for school bus driver applicants. As you remember, NSTA surveyed members in January and February to get recent data on training costs and experiences. Our data show that FMCSA underestimated the cost of this NPRM to the school bus industry by \$88 million in the first year, and nearly \$600 million in the 10-year accounting period. At that cost, the proposed training would have to result in a reduction of 24 fatal interstate school bus crashes per year in order for the benefit to equal the cost. Since we are aware of only one fatal crash involving an interstate school bus in the past fifteen years, that is clearly a benefit that cannot be attained. In regard to school bus drivers, FMCSA is proposing a solution where no problem exists. On the contrary, the current driver training provided by the school bus industry based on state requirements has proven effective as evidenced by the safety record. Implementing this NPRM would significantly increase costs for carriers and exacerbate the school bus driver shortage. The result would be a decrease in student transportation safety, as schools were forced to cut back on busing and children were forced to find less safe ways to get to school. You can let FMCSA know what you think of this proposal by going to www.regulations.com and entering FMCSA-2007-27748 in the search box. Click on the comment icon and you can enter your comments directly online.

Recalls

International RE, FBC, and SFC, model year 2008-2009. A manufacturing defect in the subassembly of the front axle wheelhub resulted in bearing being inadequately lubricated. This condition could cause the front axle bearings to overheat, which can result in bearing seizing, or related damage, possibly leading to wheel lockup or front wheel separation. Dealers will inspect the bearings and replace or lubricate as necessary. Recall is expected to begin on or about May 30.

Blue Bird All American, Conventional, and Micro Bird, MY 2006-2008, equipped with Ricon 1200, 2000, or 5500 platform style wheel chair lifts. The buses fail to comply with FMVSS 404. The threshold warning system may not detect the presence of a wheelchair or person in a certain spot within the defined threshold area; as a result the user of the lift could be injured if the lift moves unintentionally. Blue Bird is working with Ricon to correct the defect. The recall is

expected to begin on or about April 28. **Girardin MB IV school buses**, MY 2007-2008, equipped with Ricon wheelchair lifts, Series 5500. See above. Girardin will instruct owners to contact Ricon for a free repair. The recall is expected to begin during April.

Daimler Trucks FCCC B2 and FS65 school bus chassis, 2001-2008, manufactured with Arvinmeritor or Axle Alliance Company 6,000 through 8,000 pound front axles utilizing a four piece spindle-nut set. These axle assemblies may have been produced with a thin spindle nut which may lead to incorrect end play, cone spin, excessive heat, degradation of lubrication, wear of the spindle nut and bearing journal, oil contamination with metal shavings, and premature bearing failure. Continued operation may lead to wheel separation and possibly a vehicle crash. Daimler Trucks will notify owners and will repair the vehicles. The recall is expected to begin on or before May 23. **Chevrolet school buses**, MY 2005-2007, with Interlock 601 and 601 Express wheelchair lift interlock modules. When the vehicle battery voltage drops to 7.5 volts, the module may go to a fault mode and not lock the shifter in park, which fails to conform to FMVSS 403. As a result, the vehicle may be moved with the lift deployed, possibly leading to injury to the lift occupant. Chevrolet will notify owners and repair the buses free of charge.

Bendix SR7 Spring Brake Modulating Valves, manufactured from November 2005 to mid-April 2007, sold as original equipment or replacement units. Due to a manufacturing defect in the internal rubber check valve inside the SR7 spring brake modulating valves, the valves can become deformed and not seat properly. This condition will result in leakage and cause a delay in the application of the spring brake, possibly leading to unintended vehicle rollaway. Bendix will notify the owners of replacement units and the vehicle manufacturers will notify owners of buses with original equipment.

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